Advertisements to small and medium newspapers

2600. DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether her Ministry has directed the advertisers to give a minimum of nine advertisements to small and medium newspapers;

(b) if so, whether the guidelines based on the Parliamentary Committee's recommendations have been circulated to all to help the small and medium newspapers; and

(c) if so, the other decisions of the Committee considered and implemented by now?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ): (a) and (b) Government has not issued any directive to advertisers to give a minimum number of advertisements. However, the Directorate of Advertising and Visual Publicity (DAVP) has planned to step up the advertisements in a year to small and medium newspapers from the level of 3 to 9.

(c) In the meeting of the Consultative Committee of MPs attached to the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, it has been decided that a small group of members from amongst the members of the Consultative Committee may like to tour and assess the ground realities that prevail in regard to various newspapers, particularly in areas like Delhi, Bhopal, Lucknow and Jaipur. A State-wise list of newspapers has also been provided to the members of the Consultative Committee for their reference.

Competition for the programmes of AIR and Doordarshan

2601. SHRI MANOJ BHATTACHARYA: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that there is growing competition for the programmes of AIR and Doordarshan Network from the private channels;

(b) if so, the details thereof:

(c) whether Government propose to take any steps to assist the AIR/Doordarshan to take on these challenges;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The growth of private channels is providing competition to Doordarshan network in terms of veiwership and commercial revenue. This is however, limited mainly to cable and satellite homes, which constitute about 40%/45% of the total television homes. Doordarshan has the only terrestrial network, to which 89.6% of the population of the country has access. All India Radio is beginning to face competition with the entry of private FM Radio operators in some cities.

(c) to (e) Doordarshan/AIR are a public service broadcasters and cover many genres and themes of programmes, while private satellite channels/FM licenses are primarily driven by commercial interests. Prasar Bharati, which is an autonomous Corporation, has informed that Doordarshan/AIR have been improving programming structure and policies to counter the competition, while discharging their mandate as a Public Service Broadcaster. Various steps like appointment of expert Advisory committees, revised guidelines for bringing transparency and objectivity in programming, improvement in transmission quality and awards for excellence, have been taken to enhance the quality and content of Doordarshan programmes. AIR is also laying emphasis on improving quality of its software.

Access to Channels without cable

2602. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) the number of Doordarshan channels telecasting programmes at present;

(b) the number and names of channels that are available to viewers without the help of the cable operators;

(c) whether the non-availability of these channels without the help of cable operators violates the rights of the viewers to have free access to Doordarshan programmes; and